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ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS

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EEEEEEEEEEEE

TIME FLIES.

ONE MINUTE YOU'RE A KID IN HIGH SCHOOL...

MIKEY! MIKE, GET UP!

EEEEEEEEEEE

YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP THROUGH YOUR *JOB INTERVIEW!*

EEEEEEE

EEEEEEE

Oh SHIT!

AS YOU HURRY TO YOUR INTERVIEW, STILL GROGGY AND CONFUSED--

--(you don't even remember applying)...

...YOU'RE ALREADY LATE FOR YOUR FIRST DAY.

WORK STARTS AT NINE A.M., *SHARP.*

I-I'M SORRY. I THOUGHT... I didn't *realize...*

I guess time got away from me.

YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT IT IS YOU DO--

--SOMETHING WITH NUMBERS...

...BUT IT'S TOO LATE TO ASK NOW, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING THERE FOR MONTHS.

NOW THAT YOU'RE MAKING MONEY, YOU WONDER IF IT'S TIME TO MOVE OUT OF YOUR PARENTS' PLACE.

AS YOU'RE LOOKING AT APARTMENTS...

Ugh, WHAT AN UGLY COLOR.

CLICK!

...YOU'RE FINALLY ALL MOVED IN.

I GUESS IT'LL GROW ON ME.

YOU SHARE A TWO-BEDROOM, AND YOUR ROOMMATES--

--BILL--

--MIKE--

--BEN--

--SUZIE--

--"CRAZY" LARRY--

--MACKENZIE--

--JULIE--

--ARTURO--

--HASSAN--

--SIENNA--

--A GUY WHOSE NAME YOU NEVER CAUGHT--

--ARE ALWAYS COMING AND GOING, ALWAYS MOVING IN AND OUT.

A KIND OF RESPIRATION.

LIFE IS ONE BIG RUSH.

ONE NIGHT, SMOKING ON THE FIRE ESCAPE, THE ROOMMATE WHOSE NAME YOU NEVER CAUGHT SAYS THE TRUEST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD--

TIME FLIES, MAN. TIME FLIES.

SO MY PHILOSOPHY IS...

WARM FINGERS OF SMOKE CURL AROUND YOUR LUNGS.

...SMOKE 'EM IF YA GOT 'EM.

FOR THE LIFE OF YOU, YOU CAN'T REMEMBER THIS GUY'S NAME...

...WHICH MAKES IT AWKWARD WHEN THEY CALL YOU TO IDENTIFY HIS BODY, FRESHLY FISHED FROM THE RIVER.

THE CURRENT MUST HAVE GOT HIM. IT CAN GET AWAY FROM YOU.

YOU STAND THERE TRYING TO REMEMBER THE LAST TIME YOU'VE SEEN HIM. YEARS.

OFF A BRIDGE?

DID HE JUMP OR DID HE FALL?

TIME FLIES.

YOU TELL ME. HE'S YOUR FRIEND, ISN'T HE?

YOU CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE HIS EMERGENCY CONTACT.

YOU CAN'T BELIEVE HOW SHORT LIFE IS.

"SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM..."

FWOOSH

YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T MIND IF I SMOKE?

STILL DEPRESSED ABOUT ZAC--

(They say that was his name, Zac. It doesn't ring a bell.)

--YOU FIND YOURSELF ON A DATE WITH A GIRL YOU MET ON THE INTERNET.

.com

SHE LOOKS OLDER THAN HER PICTURE, BUT THEN...

I DON'T MIND.

.com

...SO DO YOU.

Cool.

SIR, YOU CAN'T SMOKE IN HERE. YOU HAVE TO PUT THAT OUT.

YOU CAN TELL IMMEDIATELY THAT IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK...

...BUT BY THEN IT'S YOUR THIRD DATE AND, WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

I'M PREGNANT.

WHICH HAS BEEN OBVIOUS FOR A WHILE FROM THE SIZE OF HER BELLY.

BUT SHE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL IN THE DRESS, AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE THERE.

(Look--Bill, Mike, Ben, Larry, Suzie, Mackenzie, Arturo--they all made it!)

AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW THESE PEOPLE?

HA HA HA

YOU TELL HER IT'S A ONE-TIME THING, BUT SHE POINTS OUT YOU'VE BEEN SEEING EACH OTHER FOR ALMOST A YEAR.

WE HAVE?

THAT'S WHEN YOU REALIZE IT'S YOUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

Oh, SHIT!

AS ONE OF ZENA'S GIFTS, YOU HIRE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER.

SMILE, MIKE.

FLASH

=Sigh=

AN AUTOMATIC COMPANY EMAIL INFORMS YOU THAT YOU'VE BEEN WORKING THERE TEN YEARS, WHICH YOU'RE SURE CAN'T BE RIGHT.

BUT IT IS.

TIME FLIES.

YOU STILL HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU DO.

SAD AND HORNY, YOU CALL SUZIE; MARY; PILAR; JUAN.

CAN I COME OVER?

I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.

BUT OF COURSE YOU HAVE.

OF COURSE YOU HAVE. YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR A WHILE NOW.

HE HAS THIS WAY OF TAKING YOUR CIGARETTE AND GENTLY TRIMMING IT AGAINST THE INNER CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE ASHTRAY...

...TAKING ONE LONG DRAG BEFORE GIVING IT BACK, EACH TIME INSISTING THAT HE DOESN'T SMOKE.

REALLY, I DON'T.

AND YOU LIKE THAT.

AFTER ONE ECSTATIC NIGHT YOU LIGHT UP, ALMOST CLOSE TO HAPPY, AND TURN ON THE TV IN THE DINGY MOTEL ROOM WHERE YOU OFTEN MEET.

click

--WIDESPREAD REPORTS OF ATYPICAL TEMPORAL PHENOMENA, OR "ATPs"--

YOU HAVE THE SENSE THAT YOU SHOULD PAY ATTENTION--

--THAT WHAT THE NEWSWOMAN IS SAYING IS DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO YOU--

--THE WHITE HOUSE HAS OFFICIALLY DECLARED A NATIONAL CRISIS--

--BUT YOU CAN'T HEAR OVER YOUR SCREAMING WIFE.

JUAN TOLD ME EVERY-THING!

HE SAYS THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE!

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED AN ATP, CALL THE NUMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR SCREEN...

JUST AS YOU FINISH PACKING THE LAST OF YOUR THINGS IN BOXES, YOU BOTH DECIDE TO GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY, FOR THE SAKE OF THE KIDS.

ZENA'S PREGNANT AGAIN, AND DESPITE HER AGE AND YOUR ISSUES, SHE WANTS TO KEEP IT.

BUT THE DOCTOR SAYS IT'S A TOTAL LOSS AND THERE'S NO HOPE.

WOMEN YOUR AGE ARE AT HIGHER RISK FOR MISCARRIAGE. AND SECONDHAND SMOKE IS A FURTHER RISK FACTOR.

YOU *REALLY* SHOULD QUIT.

YOU AGREE, AND GO AHEAD AND SIGN THE PAPERS.

DIVORCE AGREEMENT

YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING TO THE KIDS--

(How many do you have now?)

--BUT YOU'RE ASHAMED OF HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE YOU'VE BEEN BY TO SEE THEM, SO YOU JUST LEAVE.

LATE TO WORK AGAIN AND EXHAUSTED, YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR HALF A SECOND IN THE PARKING LOT...

...AND WHEN YOU OPEN THEM, YOUR HAIR'S HALF GONE AND YOUR EYES ARE SURROUNDED BY A NEW MAZE OF WRINKLES.

SORRY. THE MORNING GOT AWAY FROM ME.

BUT YOU WERE FIRED MONTHS AGO.

I WAS?

WE APPRECIATE YOUR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE, BUT WE DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW *WHAT* YOU *DID* HERE.

DO YOU?

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT YOU DON'T.

YOU *REALLY, REALLY* DON'T.

YOU FEEL SO LOUSY, YOU STOP OFF AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE FOR A CHECKUP. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOUR LAST?

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO ANSWER SIMPLE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF?

I... I DON'T REMEMBER MAKING A SINGLE DECISION IN MY LIFE. BY THE TIME I REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING, THE DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN *MADE.*

IT'S ALL... IT'S ALL MOVING TOO FAST. I CAN'T THINK... I CAN'T *BREATHE.*

HAHA, YOU AND ME BOTH, PAL!

PLEASE, DOC. *I'm drowning.*

WHAT YOU'RE DESCRIBING IS PERFECTLY NORMAL FOR A MAN YOUR AGE. AS WE GET OLDER, TIME SEEMS TO SPEED UP.

A YEAR JUST DOESN'T FEEL AS LONG AFTER FIFTY OF THEM.

FIFTY? I'M NOT FIFTY.

Am I?

WE'VE RUN ALL THE TESTS. THIS IS YOUR THIRD VISIT IN THREE MONTHS. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU.

IF YOU WANT TO FEEL BETTER, QUIT SMOKING. BEST THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR HEALTH.

"I'LL THINK ABOUT IT."

DO I KNOW YOU?

YOU GO HOME TO YOUR TINY NEW PLACE. YOU'VE BEEN LIVING THERE FOR MONTHS—

(Or is it yesterday?)

—BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU JUST MOVED IN.

KITCHEN STUFF

YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN BUSY, BUT YOU CAN'T REMEMBER DOING WHAT.

QUITTING SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE YOUR NEXT CIGARETTE TO LOOK FORWARD TO, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT ALL.

YOU CAN ONL, BREATHE WITH SMOKE IN YOUR LUNGS.

YOU TAKE OUT A PICTURE OF ZENA AND THE KIDS--

--AND THEN ONE OF JOSE.

YOU MISS THEM. YOU MISS THEM ALL SO MUCH.

SO WHEN YOU SEE JOSE AT A CHILD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY, YOU TELL HIM--

IT'S OVER WITH ZENA.

BUT HE'S ALREADY MOVED ON.

THAT WAS A *LONG* TIME AGO, MIKEY.

BUT IT DOESN'T *FEEL* LIKE A LONG TIME AGO. IT DOESN'T FEEL LONG AGO AT ALL.

BESIDES, HE'S MARRIED TO DOUG NOW. YOU KNEW THAT.

THIS IS, AFTER ALL, DOUG AND JOSE'S HOUSE. AND IT IS DOUG AND JOSE'S SON'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. YOU'RE JUST DRUNK, AND UNINVITED.

HOW DID YOU EVEN FIND OUT ABOUT THIS? ARE YOU *STALKING* ME?

YOU EXCUSE YOURSELF, YOUR VOICE CRACKING A LITTLE.

SORRY, I'M LATE FOR WORK...

WHICH WAS A LIE WHEN YOU SAID IT, BUT BY THE TIME YOU GET THERE YOU REALLY **ARE** LATE.

THIS IS COMING OUT OF YOUR PAYCHECK.

YOU DON'T REMEMBER GETTING THIS NEW JOB ANY BETTER THAN YOU REMEMBER GETTING THE OLD ONE. STILL SOMETHING WITH NUMBERS, YOU'RE PRETTY SURE.

WHEN YOU GET YOUR CHECK IT COMES WITH A SIGNIFICANT PAY CUT, BUT YOU FIGURE YOU MUST HAVE HAD YOUR REASONS FOR TAKING IT.

MOST OF THAT CHECK GOES TO YOUR CHILDREN WHO, YOU REALIZE WITH A START, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN IN YEARS.

SO, AFTER WORK (A DIFFERENT JOB, AN EVEN SMALLER PAYCHECK) YOU DROP BY YOUR OLD HOUSE.

FOR SALE

EMPTY.

WHICH YOU KNEW IT WOULD BE.

YOU RECALL WITH SOME SADNESS THAT YOUR WIFE HAS TAKEN ANOTHER MAN'S NAME AND THAT YOUR KIDS HAVE TAKEN IT TOO.

COUGH COUGH

IS THAT NORMAL?

YOU WANT TO CALL THEM BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THEIR NEW NUMBER--

--AND CAN'T REMEMBER THEIR NEW NAME TO LOOK IT UP.

SO YOU CALL JOSE INSTEAD. YOU CALL JOSE A HUNDRED TIMES.

THE 101st TIME, SOMEONE PICKS UP.

JOSE?

NO, MIKE, IT'S DOUG. JOSE... JOSE PASSED AWAY.

WHAT? HOW?

CANCER.

I... WHEN IS THE FUNERAL?

ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO. PLEASE DON'T CALL THIS NUMBER AGAIN.

CLICK

CANCER?

DOUGH DOUGH

But he didn't even smoke.

YOU DECIDE THIS IS A WAKE-UP CALL. YOU DECIDE ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

YOU FLUSH THE REST OF YOUR PACK DOWN THE TOILET.

YOU START EXERCISING.

COUGH COUGH

EATING RIGHT.

YOU FINALLY UNPACK YOUR THINGS.

AT YOGA CLASS, YOU MEET A WOMAN NAMED GINA.

I WANT TO TAKE THINGS SLOW.

COUGH

ME TOO.

YOU FINALLY SEE THE DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR PERSISTENT COUGH.

Hmmm.

I'M AFRAID IT'S CANCER.

WHAT'S MY PROGNOSIS?

IN MY PROFESSIONAL OPINION?

SHORT AND PAINFUL.

WHICH SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.

YOU THINK YOU SHOULD GET A SECOND OPINION, MAYBE SEE ANOTHER DOCTOR, BUT YOU'VE BEEN TO DOZENS AND THEY ALL SAY THE SAME THING.

YOU'R DYING.

YOU'RE DYING.

YOU'RE DYING.

RE /ING.

THEY SAY YOU'VE GOT SIX PAINFUL MONTHS, BUT TWO YEARS LATER YOU'RE STILL HERE. THEY WERE HALF RIGHT, BECAUSE EVERY SECOND IS AGONY.

COUGH COUGH COUGH

YOU WOULDN'T CALL IT LIVING, EXACTLY.

YOU'RE JUST NOT DEAD.

NOW SHOWING

DIRTY BARRY 2

GINA LEFT WHEN YOU GOT YOUR DIAGNOSIS AND YOUR KIDS WON'T TALK TO YOU.

NOW SHOWING

JAMES PISTON

DIRTY BARRY V

FILTH WORLD

cough cough

YOU PICK UP SMOKING AGAIN, EVEN THOUGH IT'S KILLING YOU.

NOW SHOWING

JAMES PISTON

DIRTY BARRY

N OF FILTH

PART ONE

YOU ONLY LEAVE THE HOUSE TO GO TO THE MOVIES AND SMOKE ON STREET CORNERS.

NOW

W

HEY! HEY YOU!

I KNOW YOU! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* OUT THERE?

I KNOW YOU!

Where'd you...?

IF YOU HAD THE BREATH FOR IT, YOU'D SCREAM.

SCREAM ABOUT HOW SHORT LIFE IS.

COUGH COUGH

LAST ONE...

FWOOSH

ABOUT HOW, BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN BRING YOUR LIPS TO IT...

...IT'S ALREADY SMOKED ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE BUTT.

ABOUT HOW ALL THAT POTENTIAL AND POSSIBILITY GOES UP IN A PUFF OF SMOKE.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD BE SO SCARED OR SO LONELY. YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW IT'S COME TO THIS...

...AND BEFORE YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER YOU JUMPED OR FELL, YOU'RE LYING COLD ON A SLAB SOMEWHERE...

YOU STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT, BUT THEN TEN YEARS GO BY WITH NO ONE SAYING YOUR NAME OR THINKING ABOUT YOU EVEN ONCE...

DAD'S STUFF

...AND FINALLY YOU GET IT.

HAS IT BEEN TEN YEARS ALREADY?

"WOW, TIME FLIES."

NEXT MONTH

-ISSUE 5

RATED M (MATURE)

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TIME IS HAVING A CRISIS!

Mingling in the red light district you can find actual cavemen, medieval knights, and cyborg soldiers on leave from World War IV. Victorian debutantes amble their way into cell phone stores, confused and bewildered (what is a data plan?); On their way to work, bleary-eyed commuters get trapped in time-loops, assaulted by alternate reality versions of themselves, try to avoid post-apocalyptic wastelands. And LOOK: the 3:15 bus just took a wrong turn…into the neolithic era.

Rising stars Deniz Camp (20TH CENTURY MEN, The Ultimates) and Eric Zawadzki (House of El) and Eisner-winners Jordie Bellaire and Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou are proud to present **ASSORTED CRISIS EVENTS**, an ongoing, zig-zagging anthology series about the compromised clicks of our clocks—full of one-shot stories both beautiful and ugly, tragic and redemptive, surreal and somehow all-too-familiar. Stories of people (and reality) in CRISIS—trying to keep it together while the world is falling apart, second by twisted second…

COVER A